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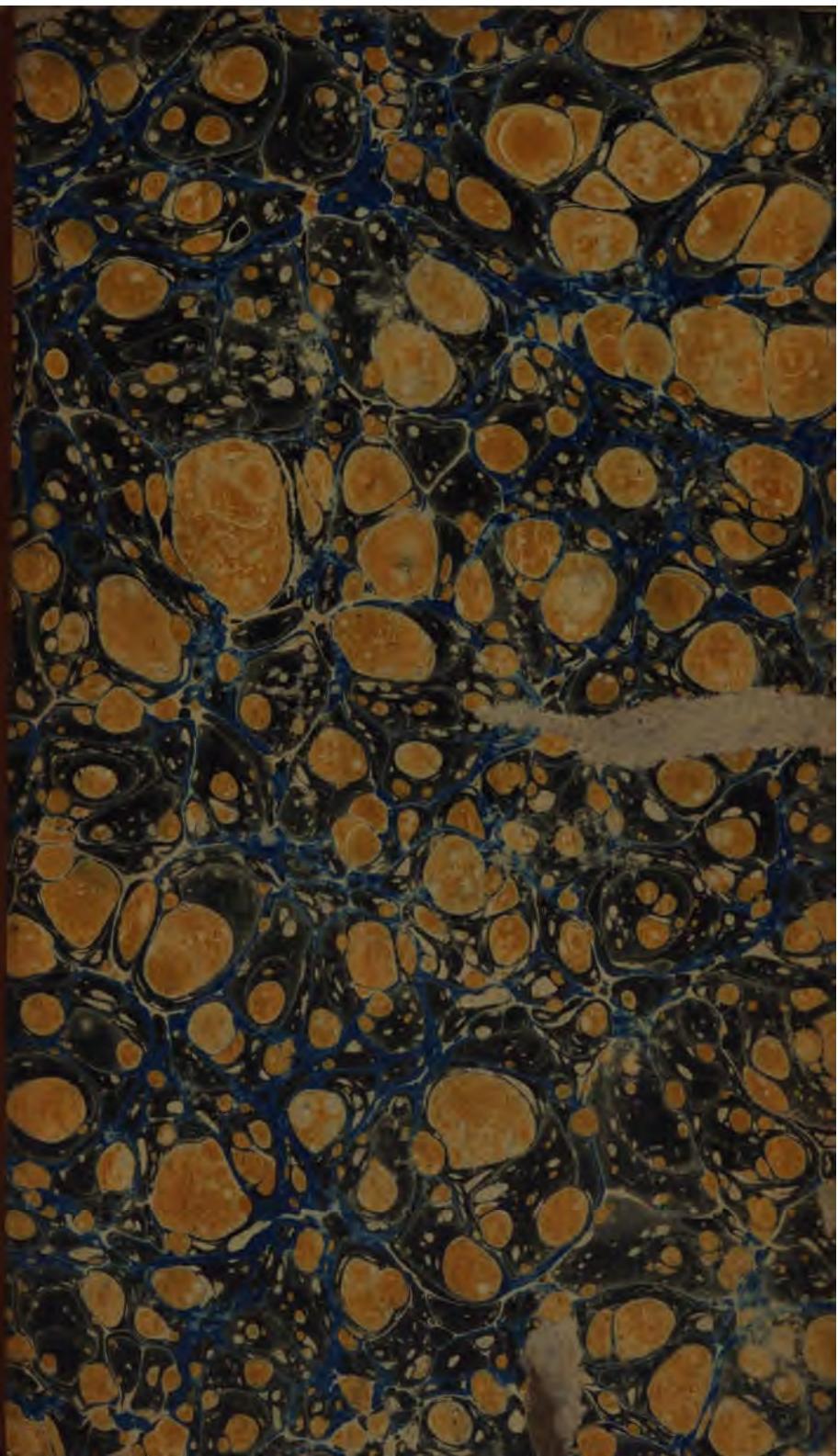
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ON THE
COMMUNICATIONS
~~between~~
BETWEEN
EUROPE AND INDIA,
~~and~~
THROUGH
EGYPT.

~~~~~  
“ It is a solecism of power to think to command the end, and yet not to  
endure the means.”—BACON’S ESSAYS—OF EMPIRE.  
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LONDON :
SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.
1846.



London:
Printed by STEWART and MURRAY,
Old Bailey.

CONTENTS.

	Page
The daily increasing importance of the Route to India through Egypt ..	1
Danger of our Communications with India through Egypt being interrupted	5
The Communications with India by way of the Red Sea in ancient times ..	10
Canal between the Nile and the Red Sea	13
The Indian Trade will soon begin to be divided between the Route through Egypt and that round the Cape of Good Hope	16
France and Austria are at present in possession of the Steam Navigation of the Mediterranean	18
The improvements now in progress in Egypt must soon increase the facilities of transport through that country.....	23
Present state of the Transit of Mails, Passengers, and goods through Egypt	29
Neglect of the Agents of the British Government, and imperfections of the British Consular establishment in Egypt	33
Projects for the formation of a Ship Canal and a Railway through Egypt	42
Mohammed Ali's system of government is adverse to the improvement of the communications with India through Egypt.....	46
Hostility between French and English policy in Egypt	51
Policy of France, in case of any revolution in Egypt, or of a general war in Europe	56
State of preparation of Great Britain for the preservation of her own possessions, and maintaining peace in the Mediterranean	64
Measures demanded by the Political and Commercial interests of Great Britain	68



INCREASING IMPORTANCE
OF THE
ROUTE TO INDIA THROUGH EGYPT.

THE importance of the communication with India through Egypt to Great Britain is already immense. All our public despatches and commercial correspondence are forwarded by Egypt and the Red Sea. And it is by the same conveyance that our civil, military, and naval authorities, whose personal services are immediately wanted, hasten to the sphere of their duties. The whole of our mercantile transactions from Bombay to Hong Kong are regulated by our communications through Egypt, though the merchandise itself still follows the route round the Cape of Good Hope.

Important, however, as the route to India through Egypt is to Great Britain, the southern nations of Europe consider that it promises very soon to be of still greater importance to them. It has already afforded foreigners the opportunity of acquiring a far more accurate idea of our Indian empire than they previously possessed, and it has given them

facilities of visiting Hindostan as travellers, of which many intelligent observers have availed themselves. A Prussian prince has lately appeared as a spectator at some of the bloodiest battles in which we have ever been engaged, weighing our defects as well as our merits with a scrutinizing eye, in order to discuss them at St. Petersburgh and Vienna, as well as at Berlin. At the same time, the rapid increase of our own communications, and the extensive circulation of our own Indian newspapers, have given our enemies and our friends accurate information concerning all the peculiarities, the difficulties, and the defects, of our Indian government. No provincial newspaper in Great Britain or Ireland follows our proceedings in India with so much attention, or keeps its readers so well informed concerning all the accidents of our civil and military authorities, as the *Universal Gazette* of Augsburg, and very few even of our best journals give a clearer and more accurate abstract of our eastern administration and policy. The knowledge thus acquired has already excited many merchants abroad to watch with attention for any opportunity which will enable the Mediterranean ports to participate in the trade of our eastern empire.

On the other hand, the natives of India are rapidly acquiring European ideas, and extending their knowledge of European politics and literature. By this means, other nations are beginning to participate in that moral influence over the minds of the

people of Hindostan once exclusively possessed by Britain, and which powerfully contributed to strengthen our political supremacy.

Yet, in spite of these changes, in spite of the importance of rapid communication with India, and in spite of the example set by Austria and France, who have occupied half the route to India with their steamers, both the British Government and the East India Company persist in neglecting the route through Egypt. The grossness of the neglect may be estimated by comparing what has been done by Great Britain and France for the purpose of maintaining frequent and rapid communication with Egypt and Syria. While France has steamers visiting Alexandria and Beyrouth three times a month, England has only two steamers monthly to Alexandria, and no means of availing herself of the route by Syria and the Euphrates, unless she make use of the French steamers to Beyrouth.

Even the steadily increasing numbers of the chests of correspondence and of official documents and newspapers which cross the desert on long trains of dromedaries, at the distant intervals of our Indian post, have not suggested to our rulers the necessity of imitating the activity and energy of the French post-office. While the French Government admits the utility of carrying their small letter-bag to Syria three times a month, the Board of Control and the princes of Leadenhall-street cannot comprehend that the merchants of England require

to communicate as frequently with our Indian empire. Improvements in the construction of steamers, and changes in the channels of trade, are, however, now in operation, which must soon awaken the British Government and the East India Company from their lethargy. Additional facilities for the transport of goods through Egypt are on the eve of completion, and France and Austria stand ready to avail themselves of this advantage.

Indeed, all the nations on the shores of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea are now eagerly watching every improvement in steam navigation, with the hope that it will enable them to place mercantile steamers in the Red Sea. These steamers would, in their opinion, enable them to establish a number of small brigs and schooners for dispersing and collecting produce at particular stations on the line of direct communication, and by this means they hope to share with us the enormous wealth which they suppose is inseparably connected with the Indian trade. Their proximity to Egypt must eventually produce some effect in their favour. The population of the shores of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea is very rapidly increasing both in numbers and wealth, and these countries daily offer a more considerable market for Indian produce. Railroads will also in a short time place Trieste, Odessa, and Marseilles, in easy communication with the central districts of Europe. The jewels, spices, and tea, required for the supply of these countries,

must then take the short route by way of the Red Sea, instead of the circuitous navigation round the Cape of Good Hope, merely to save interest of money. Unless, therefore, the navigation of the Red Sea be previously occupied by British steamers, Austrian and French packets will be seen crowded with English passengers for Aden and Bombay, as they are now seen quitting Alexandria for Malta and Greece.

*Danger of our Communications through Egypt
being interrupted.*

Our Indian empire is now governed by orders transmitted through Egypt; and the evils which would arise from any interruption in the control now exercised by the Home government over a too enterprising Governor-General or a too feeble Commander-in-chief, does not require to be particularly discussed. A moment's reflection on the immense power vested in the hands of these distant functionaries,—apt types of the Roman proconsuls and imperators, and of the Sultans of the Saracen empire of the Caliphs,—must convince every one of the extent of the danger. The rebellion of a Governor-General, and the foundation of an eastern British empire, seems an absurd dream at this moment. But when the regular administration of an empire, embracing a population exceeding one hundred millions of subjects, is allowed to remain contingent on the arrival of two steamers a month at

Suez during the height of the monsoon, it becomes difficult to say how far the negligence of our rulers may go. A trifling accident may leave India without any communications with Europe for a month.

Such an interruption in our mails might lead to dispositions of a military and naval force of two hundred thousand men, which might compromise the security of our Indian empire, or cause financial difficulties in that empire, though it possess a revenue of twenty millions sterling. But any interruption in our communications through Egypt proceeding from the hostility of a foreign power, or from the ill-will of the Egyptian Government, may leave our Ministers at home in complete ignorance of the proceedings of a foolish Governor-General for at least three months. It is certainly impolitic to shut our eyes to this danger, for it is only in time of peace that it is in our power to organise all the measures necessary to avert the unexpected occurrence of this danger at the commencement of war. It is not very statesmanlike to trust to the possibility of sending couriers by way of the Euphrates and by Persia, when the couriers by the Euphrates must take their passage in a French steamer to Beyrouth, and those through Persia in an Austrian to Trebizond. The chapter of accidents rarely turns out favourable to imprudent ministers, or to negligent nations; yet our ministers seem to allow events to take their own course unwatched, trusting to a vague and silly fancy that the fortune of England

will cause some accident to turn up at the desired moment to relieve us from the difficulties produced by our own negligence.

Should Great Britain be engaged in war with any European power, and particularly with France, there can be no doubt that every attempt would be made by our enemies to interrupt our communications with India through Egypt. All Europe regards this interruption as one of the severest wounds that the enemies of England can inflict on her power.

On the other hand, in case our enemies should prove sufficiently powerful to press us hard either in Europe or Asia, it would be a matter of inestimable importance to have it in our power to transport our military forces from Europe to Asia, and from Asia to Europe, with the greatest possible celerity, as the exigences of war may demand. A rapid means of communicating between India and Malta, both by means of the Red Sea and of the Persian Gulf, through Egypt and through Syria, would multiply tenfold the resources of Britain, and secure the defences of our possessions from Canada to Hong Kong. Indeed England, with her small standing army, with her population not trained and disciplined to defend their own territory against invaders, and with Ministers who neglect her navy, can never be duly secured against the sudden attacks of her rivals and enemies, until she can impose some restraint on their ambition by having it in her power to array the sepoy on the shores of the Mediter-

-ranean, and the highlander of Scotland and the gallant sons of Erin on the banks of the Indus and the Ganges, with a degree of speed which no other power can equal. The small amount of our military force, in comparison with the enormous extent of our empire, must be counterbalanced by abundant means of communication, and extraordinary rapidity of transport.

Yet our communications between Europe and India, by way of Egypt, are extremely deficient in both these respects. It has been already noticed, that the French steamers arrive at Alexandria more frequently than the English; and Mr. Waghorn has demonstrated that much may still be done to accelerate the transport of our Indian mails. Mr. Waghorn and the merchants of Liverpool and Glasgow long endeavoured in vain to awaken the minds of the East India Company and of the British Government to the importance of the Egyptian route. Yet even now, when Mr. Waghorn has made even schoolboys aware of the importance of this route, and though he has at length prevailed on Government to endeavour to save time on the European side of the communication, the Asiatic side is still neglected, and Great Britain and India are still able to communicate only twice a month. The subject continues to be neglected by the Legislature as well as by the Government. Parliament has only published two meagre reports on steam navigation with India. These reports con-

tain a mass of inaccurate and ill-digested information, and date so far back as the 14th July 1834, and the 15th July 1837. No inconsiderable portions of these parliamentary documents are made up of translations taken from different parts of the *Mémoire sur la Communication de la Mer des Indes à la Méditerranée, par la mer Rouge et l'Isthme de Souey*, published in the great French work by which Napoleon illustrated his Egyptian expedition with a monument of national munificence and science more lasting than his conquests.

A direct line drawn from London to Hong Kong would pass through many of the richest and most populous countries in the world. The production of articles at each end of this line, which are consumed along its whole extent, is very great. Along this line, depôts for this trade must be established; and if they are not soon formed by Britain, they will be occupied by foreigners. The share our Government is called upon to take in this extension of our commerce is to augment the facilities of communication. But unfortunately, Great Britain can expect nothing from its Ministers but speeches, unless it compel them to act by a pressure from without.

The affairs of Greece and of Cabul, the state of Turkey and of Syria, have all met with more attention from Parliament, and are embodied in more blue books, than the state of our communications with our Indian empire. Far more money has been

wasted on disorganising Greece, making Syria a scene of anarchy, and attempting to get to India by a north-west passage, than in maintaining our direct communications with the East for the benefit of our merchants. It is true that it may be precisely on account of this neglect that things are not worse, and that our communications with India are not quite in the same deplorable condition as our relations with Greece and with Cabul.

The Communications with India by way of the Red Sea in ancient times.

At a very early period in the history of the world the countries on the shores of the Mediterranean procured the productions of India by way of the Red Sea, though at a still earlier period they were procured by the Persian Gulf, and the deserts between the Euphrates and Syria. By this latter route it seems probable that the Ishmaelites, the first who are recorded in history as traders in spices, obtained the Indian commodities they were carrying to Egypt when they purchased Joseph from his brethren.* The Phoenicians subsequently rendered

* "And, behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt."—*Genesis xxxvii, 25.*

In Exodus, Indian spices are more particularly mentioned—xxx. 23. "Take thou also unto thee principal spices; of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamas two hundred and fifty shekels. And of cassia five hundred shekels."

themselves the masters of the Indian trade with Europe, and they carried it on in part by way of the Red Sea. Their principal port was at Elath (Akaba), which can be reached with greater facility than Suez by sailing vessels coming from the south. Egypt did not become the principal route of the Indian trade until the time of the Ptolemies. From the time of the Ptolemies, however, until the discovery of the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope, Europe was chiefly supplied with Indian commodities through Egypt. Under the Ptolemies, the Romans, the Arabian Caliphs, and the Mamlouk Sultans, the Indian trade, which passed through Egypt, was centered at Alexandria on the Mediterranean, and Berenice, Myos Hormos (old Kosseir), and Suez* on the Red Sea. But in consequence of the northerly winds enabling the largest vessels to stem the current of the Nile, it was found to be a much easier operation to ascend and descend the river from Alexandria to Kench (Coenopolis), or Keft (Coptos), than to reach the extreme north-western point of the Red Sea. The trade, from this circumstance, generally followed the course of the Nile as far as possible. In the time of Strabo one hundred and twenty ships, whose cargoes were sent up the Nile from Alexandria to Kench or Keft, left the port of Myos Hormos, or old Kosseir, annually for India. Benjamin of Tudela mentions, that Alexandria

* That is, Arsinoe, Clysma, and Kolzoum in its vicinity.

was in his time frequented by the Greeks, and by inhabitants of all the commercial nations of Europe. “From India,” he says, “they import all sorts of spices which are brought by Christian merchants.”*

During the middle ages the Indian trade was generally carried on by this route, and formed one of the principal sources of the wealth of Venice; though the Sultans of Egypt at times assumed the monopoly of some branches of the trade, particularly pepper, to the great injury of the Venetian merchants.† So highly did the Venetians themselves esteem the value of the commercial relations carried on through Egypt, that the possession of Egypt was, in the opinion of their statesmen, preferable to the possession of India, for a maritime power in the Mediterranean. And, perhaps, had the republic of Venice been able to execute the project of conquering Egypt, the commerce of India would, in great part, have been preserved even to this day by the Mediterranean powers.‡

* Archer’s edition, vol. i. p. 157.

† Daru *Histoire de Venise*, tom. ii. pp. 349, 439.

‡ *Histoire du Commerce de Venise par Marino*, tom. iv. liv. 3, 4. *Histoire de Venise*, Daru, iii. 20. The route by Kench and Kosseir is still used as an easy way to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. The author has seen Persian pilgrims, who have taken the Austrian steamers from Trebizonde, Constantinople, and Smyrna, to Alexandria. From thence they mounted the Nile to Kench; instead of joining the Hadj at Cairo and traversing the desert for forty days on camels. After crossing the desert, in six days, from Kench to Kosseir, they took boats to Djidda.

The Canal between the Nile and the Red Sea.

Nearly one thousand years before the birth of Christ, the wealth acquired by Solomon, in consequence of his becoming a participator in the Phœnician trade on the Red Sea, excited the envy of the sovereigns of Egypt.* Shishak, or Sesonchis, in order to secure as large a portion as possible of this wealth by the shortest means, invaded Judea and plundered Jerusalem, during the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. “Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem, and he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king’s house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.”† Now this Sesonechis had his capital at Babastés, and is undoubtedly the Sesostris mentioned by Aristotle, Strabo, and Pliny, as having conceived the project of uniting the Nile, in the neighbourhood of his capital, with the Red Sea. He seems to have commenced the work, but he did not complete it.

This great project was resumed by Pharaoh Necho, who reigned in Egypt about six hundred years before Christ, and who, like his predecessor

* 1 Kings ix. 26.—“And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezión-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom.” Also, 2 Chronicles viii. 17.

† 1 Kings xiv. 27; 2 Chronicles xii. 9.

Shishak, had his attention divided between plundering the wealth of Palestine and Syria, which was derived from the commerce of the Red Sea, and rendering his own subjects masters of that commerce. Though the work at the canal was prosecuted for some time with great energy, it was again abandoned. It was subsequently completed by Darius, after the Persians had conquered Egypt; but it was left unconnected with the Red Sea, in consequence of the level of that sea having been found to be much higher than the level of the land in the Delta. In the time of Ptolemy the Second, the adaptation of locks to canals having been discovered, this ingenious contrivance was adopted to connect the mouth of the canal with the Red Sea. The undertaking was then completed, and at the height of the inundation a portion of the water of the Nile flowed into the Gulf of Suez.*

This canal, even after the improvements it received from Trajan and Hadrian, did not contain water for more than six months in the year. This circumstance, and the delay experienced by vessels in reaching the mouth of the canal, from the violence of the northerly winds in the Red Sea, prevented its becoming the great route of the Indian trade; and it was generally only used as a means of transporting Eastern produce to the Mediterranean

* Compare Herodotus, book ii. s. 158, with Diodorus, book i. s. 33, and Strabo, book xvii. c. 1.

when the more expeditious routes, by Berenice or Myos Hormos, were interrupted by tribes of predatory Arabs.

The great utility of this canal was in the facilities it afforded to the Egyptians of conveying their agricultural produce to the shores of the Red Sea, and dispersing it over all the commercial establishments, which were then numerous on the arid coast of Arabia. Even the Phoenician commerce, and the trade of Solomon's subjects, could not have existed without drawing large supplies of provisions from Egypt.

This canal remained open for about thirteen hundred years, having been finally closed by the Caliph Al Mansor, in the year 765, to prevent the Egyptians exporting provisions to a rebel who had seized Medina. The agricultural resources of Egypt can never, indeed, be fully developed, except when this canal is open, as the population of Arabia would always afford an excellent market for much of the produce of the Delta.

The Venetians offered to restore this canal, in modern times, at their own expense; and the work would not be attended with any engineering difficulties, nor would the expense be great in comparison with the magnitude of the undertaking.*

* The author of this memoir published "a Historical Account of the Canal which connected the Nile and the Mediterranean in ancient times," in *Blackwood's Magazine*, for August, 1844, in which he endeavoured to collect every historical notice

The Indian Trade will soon begin to be divided, between the Route through Egypt and that round, the Cape of Good Hope.

At present the trade between Europe, India, and China is almost entirely carried on round the Cape of Good Hope. A very small quantity of the produce of China, it is true, is conveyed to Europe through Russia; and some merchandize, of great value and small bulk, sometimes passes through Egypt. But there are many signs of the times which indicate that, in a very few years, the rapidly increasing consumption of Indian produce on the shores of the Mediterranean will cause no inconsiderable portion of the Indian trade to take the route by the Red Sea and Egypt. The population of the countries round the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and on the banks of the Danube and the Don, is rapidly increasing in numbers and wealth. Railroads will soon connect Trieste with the centre of Germany and with the Baltic, and Odessa with Moscow, the centre of Russia, and St. Petersburg. The expense of transport by steam, both in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, is at the same time diminishing, in consequence of the improvements already made in steam navigation,

of any importance relating to it in ancient writers. He has since examined its remains, from Balbeis to Suez, with care and attention, in company with Mr. Paton, author of the *Modern Syrians* and *Servia*.

and the larger size of the vessels employed in the trade. While the mighty changes which are on the eve of taking place in Egypt will soon greatly facilitate the means of transporting merchandise through that country, and diminish, in a proportionate degree, the expense of transport.

It is well known that a very trifling diminution in the expense of freight to Suez, and of the transport through Egypt, would cause a considerable importation of Indian and Chinese produce into the ports of Marseilles, Trieste, and Odessa. Many other ports of the Mediterranean, as Smyrna, Constantinople, Palermo, Naples, Leghorn, Genoa, and Malta, would soon find it profitable to engage their small and cheaply navigated vessels in the same trade. England must, therefore, lose no time in preparing to meet this change. It is absurd to suppose that the natural progress of man's industry and intelligence can be arrested by any combinations of our merchants, by the intrigues of our diplomats, or even by that ignorance and neglect of commercial relations which was once a characteristic of European statesmen.

Consequently, if Great Britain desires to maintain her present supremacy in the Indian trade, she must be the first to occupy the new route with her capital. She must convert Malta and Corfu into her depôts in this new commercial line, or she will shortly see this trade centered in Marseilles and Trieste.

*France and Austria are at present in possession of
the Steam Navigation of the Mediterranean.*

France and Austria have already succeeded in driving the steam vessels of Great Britain from many of the ports of the Mediterranean. France has already upwards of forty steam packets engaged in the transport of mails and passengers, all built as men-of-war, and capable of mounting heavy guns in case of war. Not only Africa and Corsica, but also the principal ports of Italy, Malta, Greece, Smyrna, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Beyrouth, are all dependent on the French packets for their quickest and most regular communications with Great Britain. Our ambassadors and our merchants carry on their intrigues and their business through the activity and intelligence displayed by the French government; and in the Levant, certainly, our ambassadors are far from being grateful to France for the obligation. English letters form the great bulk of the mail-bags, and English travellers the great majority of the passengers of these splendid packets. Besides this line of government steamers, a mercantile line has lately been established for the conveyance of goods between Marseilles, Constantinople, and the intermediate ports.

An Austrian Company has already thirty steamers in the Mediterranean, and it is now occupied in constructing several new ones, of large size, in order to occupy the direct line between Trieste and

Alexandria. All the coast of the Austrian empire in the Adriatic is connected by a well organised line of packets which carry merchandise as well as passengers. Dalmatia is rapidly improving under the facilities of communication thus established, joined to the excellent roads formed by the Austrian government for facilitating internal trade. Both in the Levant, and the Black Sea, the Austrian steamers have obtained the greater part of the carrying trade of all valuable merchandise. Corfu, Patras, Athens, Syra, Smyrna, Salonica, Constantinople, Varna, the mouth of the Danube, Trebizond, Scio, Rhodes, Cyprus and Beyrouth, are all regularly visited by Austrian steamers. The commerce of all these places is now dependent on the arrival of the steam vessels of an Austrian steam company : an English steamer makes its appearance at rare intervals, to prove to the inhabitants that the English have not yet forgotten the art of constructing steam-engines, and that the supply of coals in England is not completely exhausted, as they are sometimes informed.

While the English post-office packets do not often make their appearance in the ports of the Mediterranean, our pride can console itself by vaunting the wonders of our steam navigation in the ports of the ocean. But when an English post-office packet actually makes its appearance beside one of the French packets of the Alexandrian line, there is nothing left for an Englishman, except to

declare that he is near-sighted, no sailor, and does not understand French. The fact is, the French surpass us as much in the quality, as they do in the number of their steam packets in the Mediterranean.

But the negligence of our ministers is shown in a much greater dereliction of duty than leaving us with a few steamers in the Mediterranean, and those steamers of a class and quality to throw contempt on our navy. It will hardly be credited by people at home, but it is a sad and disgraceful fact, that the inhabitants of the British possessions in the Mediterranean have no direct and regular means of intercourse by steam packets. They alone, of all the inhabitants of the shores of the Mediterranean, are excluded from this blessing, unless they can avail themselves of an Austrian or French vessel. For instance, if an inhabitant of Corfu, Malta, Zante, Cephalonia, Santa Maura, Paxos Cerigo, or Gozo, desire to proceed to Gibraltar on pressing business, he cannot do so, unless he avails himself of an English steamer returning from Alexandria every fortnight; and then he will find that he has to perform quarantine at Gibraltar. The consequence is, that British subjects in the Mediterranean wishing to visit Gibraltar, usually proceed to Marseilles, and continue their voyage down the coast of Spain in the French and Spanish boats.

It is a ridiculous farce to boast of our great naval power, and to print a monthly navy list large enough

for all the fleets of Europe combined, and dead enough to make the fortune of a couple of book-sellers, when this mighty naval power is utterly useless to the unfortunate subjects of Great Britain, who find themselves dependent on foreigners for the means of intercourse between one port of the British empire and another. The Ionians and Maltese pay taxes to Great Britain, and a considerable amount of the taxation levied on them, goes directly into the pockets of Englishmen, yet their local advantages are continually sacrificed, not to British interest, but to the ease and comfort of British officials. As they are most unjustly left without representatives in the Imperial Parliament, they have surely a right to demand that the British Government devotes some attention to their interests, and establishes a complete system of inter-communication between every portion of our empire in the Mediterranean, on the model of the French and Austrian steam packets. If the people of Great Britain and Ireland were entitled as a matter of right to participate in the advantages London derived from its being the centre of our post-office; the people of Gibraltar, Malta, and the Ionian islands have a right to have their communications defended by the central government at home, from the inconveniences resulting from the speculations of private companies.

It avails us little now to count the number of the French and Austrian steamers in the Mediterranean, or to look back at the past. The question at

present is, to consider what common sense and ordinary prudence requires us to do, as things actually stand.

Lord Palmerston is proverbially fond of getting England into hot water. It will be fortunate, indeed, if he gratify his taste during his present administration by devoting his talents to steam. By applying the steam, he may get up to increasing our communications with India ; and extending them in the Mediterranean, he will do more to benefit his country, than he did during his last administration, when he put the Syrians, Greeks, and Affghans, the late Sultan Mahmoud and old Mohammed Ali all into hot war in order to cure the political evils of the east. We do not, here, wish to praise Lord Aberdeen by depreciating his predecessor. The noble earl, true to his plan of political rivalry with the energetic viscount, threw cold water on everything. No man in his senses, therefore, thought it was possible to get up steam under his system of frigidity.

The truth is, the people of England must look after their own affairs, abroad as well as at home, if they wish serious attention to be paid to their duties by Foreign Secretaries and distant ambassadors. These gentlemen are too much occupied with court intrigues when out of sight, and with questions of patronage, pence, titles, pensions, and stars, to think of the commercial interests of the British empire or of the people, unless these interests are forced on their

attention by a minister like Sir Robert Peel, or by some decided expression of public opinion. It may still require all the attention of the British public to prevent Lord Palmerston running in at the first diplomatic door through which he can see a fire burning with a kettle on it.

The Improvements now in progress in Egypt must soon increase the facilities of Transport through that country.

The Pasha of Egypt is at present engaged in executing improvements in the channel of the Nile, which, when completed, will rival the most celebrated works of antiquity in grandeur of conception, and form an era in the history of mankind, from the wide extended influence they will produce on the civilization of a large portion of the human race. The work of Mohammed Ali will surpass both the Pyramids and the Lake of Moeris ; it will equal the one in the magnitude of the design, and the other in its extensive utility.

The object of this great undertaking of the Pasha is to raise the permanent level of the Nile, above the point of the Delta, to nearly the mean height of the inundation. It is proposed to effect this by throwing an immense dam across the Nile, at this point, with sluices to carry off the superabundant water, as may appear necessary. This dam is called the *barrage* of the Nile, and it will be one of the wonders of the world in future ages. The plan on

which it has been commenced is to construct a bridge of about eighty arches over the river. Sluices are to be left for the passage of boats into each branch of the river; and the arches are to be closed by gates, in order to afford the means of raising or lowering the level of the water at pleasure. The commencement of the work is alone sufficient to immortalize the government of Mohammed Ali; for, even should this first attempt fail, the execution of the project is so closely connected with the improvement of Egypt, and with the commercial schemes of the Mediterranean nations, that its ultimate execution is certain. Seven thousand men have been working for several months at the undertaking, under the direction of Monsieur Mongel, the able French engineer, who constructed the dry dock at Alexandria.

It would be out of place here to criticise either the manner in which this magnificent work is to be performed, or to examine into the details of the method by which Monsieur Mongel and the engineers of the Pasha are carrying it into execution. There can be no doubt, that though the work is attended with considerable difficulties in the execution, it is nevertheless an undertaking opposed by no insuperable obstacle. Its perfect execution is a matter of expense; and the judgment of the engineer will be best shown in the calculations by which he renders the means conformable to the end. Probably, experience will show that unless the sur-

plus water be carried off by new canals to Alexandria and to the Red Sea, a few inundations will suffice to land the arches of the *barrage* at Rosetta and Damietta.

It is, however, the fashion of the English in Egypt to criticise and ridicule this work, and we do not wish to fall into the same error. The history of the dry dock at Alexandria may serve as a caution to travellers not to listen to the suggestions of disappointed jealousy or rival speculations. Even our Foreign Office officials may learn a lesson of prudence, and refrain from indulging the spirit of diplomatic prophecy and their own anti-Gallican spleen and envy, at the expense of the *barrage* and their own ignorance.

Several years ago, the Pasha of Egypt employed Monsieur Mongel to construct a dry dock at Alexandria. The English at that time had no dry dock in the Mediterranean, though they are now employed in constructing one at Malta. The English in Egypt, one and all, though few knew anything about dry docks, declared that the French plan was a bad one, and that the dock would never be finished. English engineers recommended a different plan, and the work really presented considerable difficulties. The dry dock in question has notwithstanding been completed on the plan of Monsieur Mongel. As some filtration goes on through the foundations, the English persist in declaring it is a wet dock. The author of this me-

moir has, however, seen the keel of a line of battle ship undergoing repair in it, and consequently in spite of his patriotism, he has resolved not to sneer at it, until our own dry dock at Malta be finished. It is not to be denied, however, that every public work in Egypt is capriciously executed, and generally the latter part completed in a hasty and not very solid manner. But might not the same thing be said of some of the works of that munificent patron of the fine arts, King Louis of Bavaria? The inhabitants of London may have heard of Nelson's column.

There cannot be a doubt that the *barrage* may be as effectually completed as the dry dock. And should it be once terminated, and all the advantages to be derived from its completion practically illustrated, there can be no doubt that even if it should be swept away in the course of the first summer,—a thing by no means impossible,—still the government of Egypt would immediately commence its restoration.

It must be recollected, that the primary object of the *barrage*, and the sole object in the view of the Pasha, is to augment the agricultural resources of Egypt, and diminish the expense of cultivating the land below the point of the Delta. It would save the expense of constructing and keeping in repair about 40,000 water wheels, and the price and labour of 100,000 oxen, and it would render the labour of 40,000 men disposable for more profit.

able occupations of agriculture than now engage it. But the influence of the *barrage* on the internal commerce of Egypt, and the facilities it will suggest for extending the foreign trade of the country, will soon be discovered to be even more important than the benefits it will confer on agriculture. Though less apparent to Mohammed Ali and the inhabitants of Egypt, they are equally evident and far more interesting to the world at large.

The level of the Nile being raised by the *barrage*, it will be generally retained at a height of about eighteen feet above the lowest level to which the waters fall at present. This will make the level of the river above the *barrage*, at least thirty-four feet higher than the level of the sea at Alexandria, and about nine feet higher than the level of the Red Sea at low water. The completion of the *barrage* would therefore immediately suggest the necessity of turning off some of the surplus water at the height of the inundation into the Wady Tomlat, along the traces of the canal which about one thousand years ago, carried a branch of the Nile to the neighbourhood of Suez. Of this fact we have the testimony of a British monk, who sailed from Babylon (old Cairo) to the Red Sea on the waters of the Nile, about the year A.D. 765, just before it was finally closed by the Caliph Al Mansour.*

* Quanquam in libris alicujus auctoris fluminis Nili partem in Rubrum mare exire nequaquam legimus, tamen affirmans Pidatis frater meo magistro Suibneo narravit coram me, quod, adorationis

"Two great canals, or rather new branches of the Nile, one leading directly to Alexandria, and the other to Suez, are necessary corollaries of the *barrage*. These two new canals will, undoubtedly, ultimately become the leading mouths of the Nile, and supplant the branches of Rosetta and Damietta, just as the branches of Rosetta and Damietta, which were themselves originally artificial canals, supplanted the seven ancient mouths of the Nile in size, and utility. The Nile himself first instilled into mankind the utilitarian spirit, and from the most ancient times he has submitted to its trammels with becoming docility.

After all, in spite of our wonderful discoveries and boundless self-complacency, we have still something to learn concerning the mechanical and useful arts from ancient Egypt. No modern work conveys so high an idea of mechanical skill and gigantic power as the relics of the stupendous granite statue of Rameses 2nd in the Memnonium of Thebes;* there is none which equals the Pyramids in size, nor causa, in urbe Hierusalem clerici et laici ab Hibernia usque ad Nilum vellificaverunt. Deinceps, intrantes in naves in Nilo flumine, usque ad introitum Rubri maris navigaverunt. Dicuil liber de Mensura orbis terræ, c. vi. 3.

Recherches, géographiques et critiques, sur le livre de Mensura, etc., composé en Irlande au commencement du neuvième siècle, par Dicuil. Par A. Letronne. Paris, 1814, p. 24.

* This statue, consisting of a single block of syenitic granite, weighed about 887 tons 5½ hundredweight. The distance from the quarries at Syene to Thebes is 124 miles.

any which approaches the Lake Moëris in extent and utility.

We may feel assured that at no very distant period we shall see steamers announced to leave Alexandria regularly once a week along the new branches of the Nile direct for Suez. Even at present the water of the Nile would flow to within thirty-six miles of the Red Sea, if it had not been prevented from entering the valley of Abousuer by the Pasha of Egypt, when he dug the new canal for the irrigation of the Wadi Tomlat. At the end of the month of February, the author saw a strong stream flowing to the eastward beyond Ras-el-Wadi.

Present State of the Transit of Mails, Passengers, and Goods through Egypt.

The transit through Egypt is carried on in a very ill-organised manner, and travellers are compelled to pay enormous prices in order to support an ill-managed business. It is, however, capable of immediate improvement. Last year the Transit Company was an English society, which possessed a monopoly, and charged Indian passengers 15*l.*, each for their conveyance from Alexandria to Cairo, exclusive of hotel expenses. Mohammed Ali, the most rapacious merchant in the habitable world, has now taken the business into his own hands. He has maintained the monopoly, but reduced the charges. So much for the liberality of

English mercantile principles, beyond the direct control of a prospective rival establishment.

A very few details concerning the manner in which this monopoly has been conducted, will be sufficient to show the necessity of the British Government paying some slight attention to the proceedings both of its officials and its subjects abroad. For whether in the hands of an English company, or as a branch of the Egyptian administration, the manner of conducting the transit business will remain essentially the same as long as it remains a monopoly. It ought not to escape the attention of our Government too, that it is quite as much the duty of Ministers to protect individual Englishmen against the rapacity and extortion of powerful societies of their own countrymen by direct interference, as against monopolies of Mohammed Ali, or Sultan Abdul Meschid, by diplomatic notes or commercial treaties.

The author has been a suffering witness of the disorderly manner in which the Indian passengers are conveyed from Alexandria to Cairo. On that occasion he witnessed the very worst steam-boat arrangements which have ever fallen under his notice, with the exception of those on the Rhone between Lyons and Avignon. In the boats on the Nile there is an attempt made to preserve some order in the management of the vessel, and to prevent the Indian passengers getting at the filtered water, when there happens to be a Turkish grandee

and a few Alexandrian merchants on board ; but in the steamers on the Rhone it is what the Italians very scientifically term "*una vera repubbica.*"

The distance from Alexandria to Cairo, is 170 miles, and the passage usually occupies thirty-two hours. The fare paid was *8l. 10s.* or *5d.* a mile. Now the rate of fare on board the French and Austrian steamers in the Levant, is only a franc for a marine league, which is little more than *3½d.* a mile. The French steamers furnish you with a good room, a bed, clean linen, and a toilet table. The Egyptian Transit Company allows its passengers, if female, a common hall below stairs, and if male, a plank on the deck. We were transferred from the canal boats at Atfeh to the larger steamers on the Nile in the dark. A Maltese speaking English, with a large lantern, declared that we should lose our passage, if we did not jump on board a steamer indicated, where we should find our baggage conveyed by magic. Scarcely had we placed our foot on board when away we went. Our baggage followed some time after, but having been placed with the goods in the better boat, we found that it had arrived at Cairo before us. The comfort and the health of the passengers is sacrificed in this shameful way to gain some hours for transferring the goods. The canopy of heaven, on a damp night, was our only covering, our neighbours' sides our only pillows, our remedy against ophthalmia, a morning wash in a ship's bucket. A bad

breakfast and a worse dinner were given us without any extra charge. Both filth and food are supplied as included in the bargain for the passage, and we must own that, as far as quantity was concerned, there was no lack of either.

From Cairo to Suez things were, and doubtless still are, much worse. The unfortunate passengers then paid 12*l.* each, for riding six or eight together in a dog cart for a distance of eighty-four miles. As the English company had secured an effectual monopoly of the road, it was generally impossible to procure either camels or donkeys from Cairo direct to Suez. The ordinary price paid for the hire of a single camel before the establishment of the monopoly, was 9*s.* and for a donkey, 15*s.*, and it required the interference of the police of Cairo, and an attempt to put passengers who did not avail themselves of the Transit Company into quarantine on their arrival at Suez, to prevent an opposition on the part of the camel drivers and donkey boys.

One of the objects of the author's visit to Egypt, was to examine the various lines of communication between the Nile, the Mediterranean, and the Red Sea. He was anxious to examine not only the line of the ancient canal, but also that of the proposed ship canal between Tineh and Suez, and the proposed railway between Cairo and Suez. He discovered that by avoiding the direct road to Suez, he could effect his purpose without falling into the rapacious claws of the English Transit Company.

He completed his journey by the line of the ancient canal to Suez, and from Suez to Cairo along the proposed line of the railway in ten days; the hire of four dromedaries and three men, for this journey, cost him only 4*l.* And the whole journey including provisions, hotel expenses at Suez, and presents, cost only 10*d.* a mile; while, had he availed himself of the service of the Transit Company, it would have cost him 3*s.* a mile, without including hotel expenses at Suez.

Under proper arrangements, there can be no doubt that the conveyance of passengers from Alexandria to Suez, would be well paid at the rate of 6*l.* each, and rival companies could be immediately formed at that rate.

Neglect of the Agents of the British Government, and imperfections of the British Consular Establishment in Egypt.

It is necessary to preface the notices we are about to make public concerning the state of our diplomatic establishment in Egypt, with a few general observations. England can never expect to see the details of her foreign relations on a proper footing, until the Secretary for Foreign Affairs is compelled to lay before Parliament an annual report on the whole circle of our relations abroad. This report must be considered as much a practical portion of our annual parliamentary business as the budget itself, and it must be printed, accompanied by spe-

cial reports from every Ambassador or Consul by whose agency we maintain an intercourse with any foreign state. The information thus afforded concerning the foreign, political, and commercial relations of Great Britain, will be found extremely effectual in preventing the sudden augmentation of the budget under the pretext of necessary hostile demonstrations.

Something of this kind has now become absolutely necessary, for two reasons. On the one hand, it is necessary in order to protect the policy of the executive against any factious interference with our foreign relations. Our government has become so entirely parliamentary, that it is in some danger of becoming so essentially democratic as to afford the popular will the power of enforcing its fancies without waiting for the deliberate sanction of public opinion. One of the inconveniences of a democratic government is, that popular prejudices can easily be excited by demagogues for factious purposes, and this power is greatly increased where education is imperfect, and truth not easily attainable. As long therefore as the people are kept systematically in ignorance of the principles of our diplomatic policy, the measures of the executive government must be exposed to dangerous changes. Public opinion is at present very imperfectly formed on most questions of foreign and colonial policy, and a very slight derangement of the balance of things maintained by Louis Philippe, might afford

Lord Palmerston a chance of acting the warlike demagogue with some shadow of success.

On the other hand, it is equally requisite to protect the national interests against ministerial or court intrigues. When the Secretary for Foreign affairs is compelled year after year to announce sound and honest principles of foreign policy as the guides of his conduct, in his report to Parliament, he will at last find that he cannot depart from them. When our ambassadors, too, find themselves compelled once a year to find a reason for their behaviour, they will perhaps feel themselves bound to behave with some consistency.

Every thing which replaces arbitrary power by systematic rules, and yet at the same time leaves the executive energy of the government with perfect liberty of action, is a step towards a better form of administration, an additional security for the maintenance of peace, and a guarantee that war when it becomes necessary, will be undertaken in a just cause, will be vigorously prosecuted, and, it is to be hoped, advantageously terminated.

But to return to details. In Egypt, one of the first and most important duties of our diplomatic and consular authorities, is to keep the government at home perfectly informed concerning everything which can affect our communications with India. To make government understand the true bearings of the question as it affects individual travellers and private speculators, as well as national interests.

The transit of the mails, the conveyance of passengers, and the transport of merchandise, are subjects so closely connected both with the prosperity of Great Britain and India, that our diplomatic relations in Egypt are of infinitely more importance than those at any European court, with the exception of France, Russia, and Austria.

Now, had our government at home been kept fully informed of the state of affairs in Egypt, it cannot be supposed that it would have committed so gross a political and diplomatic error as it did in tolerating the existence of a monopoly in the hands of the English Egyptian Transit Company. It was certainly a very silly proceeding, to legitimize a future monopoly for excluding Englishmen from any control over the communications with India through Egypt, merely to swallow so small a bait to British avarice. It may be further observed, that if the attention of our diplomatic and consular agents in Egypt had been sufficiently active, Great Britain would not have had her character disgraced by persons appearing to be connected with the Government, and with public bodies, presenting themselves at the court of Mohammed Ali, soliciting the monopoly of transit, as if they were authorised to treat concerning the transference with the consent of the British Government. At Constantinople, Great Britain was the declared enemy of all monopoly; at Alexandria, she winked at monopoly, but at Cairo, she supported it. Our diplomatic

agents in Egypt, ought clearly to have obtained from the Government at home the authority to disavow all negotiations carried on by Englishmen, for the purpose of establishing monopolies of the transit, as being a species of temporary slave trade. All attempts to establish a monopoly which throws impediments in the way of British subjects hiring carriages, camels, or donkeys, from Cairo to Suez, ought to be equally opposed by the British government, whether the monopoly is for the profit of Englishmen or foreigners.

Our Consular service in the Levant, though it has of late years undergone some small improvement, is still in a vitiated condition. It would be wandering too far from our immediate subject to institute an examination of the systematic arrangements necessary for the improvement of this branch of the public service. "Set a thief to catch a thief," is a maxim of political wisdom which has been long adopted as a guide by British statesmen. This maxim may, however, be abandoned, the lords are not likely now-a-days to say *quod non sunt leges Angliae mutare*, so that we may some day have Consuls who are neither merchants, nor money brokers, nor traders, domiciled amongst the Philistines. It is, unfortunately, still the habit of Great Britain to name merchants as Consuls in the Levant, though the nature of the trade in the east, and the condition of society, render it extremely unsuitable. France

might have afforded us a lesson in the enormous advantage to be derived from preventing our Consuls from engaging in commercial rivalry with the natives.

The information transmitted home by trading Consuls, must derive some colouring from the nature of the consular speculations ; and the profits of Consul and Company are as likely to be uppermost in the mind of the Consul as the interests of the British Government. In the opinion of an individual Consul making a rapid fortune, it may appear to be a matter of indifference to the British empire, whether the transit through Egypt be improved a few years sooner or later, or whether Greece remain in a state of anarchy for a dozen years longer. The official contempt for consular information at the foreign office is founded on experience, but it is wonderful that the experience which has created the contempt, has not induced our foreign secretaries to remedy the evil, by laying down rules for ensuring the nomination of gentlemen possessing an education suitable to the official duties of the consulate as Consuls in the Levant. But, alas ! few ministers, like Peel and Wellington, will sacrifice their own patronage for the good of their country. It is said, that the British Government has lately complained to the Swedish, that the Swedish Consul-General in Greece is engaged in trade, and derives advantages from his peculiar situation. The English Consulate was charged with the investigation of the business.

It seems very probable that the Swedish Government will return the British memorial with the remark, "mutato nomine de te Fabula narratur."

Egypt is naturally a land of monopoly. Mohammed Ali is more the monopolizer of Egypt's resources than the Sovereign of Egypt. The British Consulate at Cairo is an admirable illustration of Mohammed Ali's principles, and of the universality of the system of monopoly in the country, and affords us an excellent illustration of that utter want of all political principle, which allows our foreign office to receive the impress of its character from a Government so barbarous as that of the Pasha of Egypt.

The British Consul at Cairo, holds the five following offices and employments :—

1. British Consul.
2. Agent of the East India Company.
3. Agent of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Company.
4. Banker and Agent for Messrs. Briggs and Company, merchants in Alexandria.
5. Contractor for transport by land and water.

Now the latter employments are certainly incompatible with the situation of British Consul. The East India Company ought to feel that its interests would be better attended to, and the mails which reach Egypt by the Peninsular and Oriental Steamers would be more rapidly transmitted through Egypt, if their agent were totally unconnected with

the transmission of the goods and packages of a steam company, the commercial affairs of Alexandrian merchants, or the profits of contracts.

Even the British Consul may be ordered by the foreign office to take measures in direct opposition to those which the interests of the honourable company may require. Lord Palmerston's policy concerning Syria affords one illustration of this fact, the recall of Lord Ellenborough, and the Duke of Wellington's violent explosion in the House of Lords on the subject of that recall, afford equally strong advertisements. And with regard to this recall it may be observed, that time seems to have proved that the East India Company was right, though it had the prudence and magnanimity to remain silent, and the noble Duke and the British Government wrong. The time may again not be far distant, when the East India Company may find it of vital importance in Egypt to have an agent charged with transacting its business, whose attention is directed to Calcutta and Leadenhall-street, instead of confiding its business to dependants of Downing-street and the Horse Guards.

If an agent of the East India Company be really necessary in Egypt, common sense ought to dictate to the Honourable Company to have a man of their own in the post. The imprudence of having an official servant of the British Government requires no comment. But the folly of the British Government and of the East India Company in allowing

their Consuls and agents to annex to their official duties the speculations of steam company agent, banker, bill broker, and contractor, is utterly inexplicable. In the east, the discredit of the proceeding to our diplomatic and national character is increased by a comparison with the superior consideration enjoyed by all non-trading Consuls. Indeed, the mere fact of a Consul coming in direct collision with the pecuniary interests of native traders is enough, in Turkey, Egypt, and Greece, to rouse the voice of calumny even against a minister, let alone a Consul.

It must also be recollected that our Consuls in the East are invested with extensive judicial authority; and in many cases they make most wretched judges. It is fearful, indeed, to touch on the deep-seated abuses existing in the British Consulates, but it requires no proof to assert that a trader can hardly make a just judge, and never, an unsuspected one. Lord Bacon says, "one foul sentence doth more hurt than many foul examples." Yet the British Government confers on its Consuls the power of converting their foul examples into fouler sentences.

Had the places we have enumerated, as accumulated in the British Consulate, been kept separate, our Government at home would have been kept much better informed concerning the state and prospects of the transit through Egypt. The Foreign Office must, however, now feel the im-

mense importance of the subject ; and a gentleman well instructed in the laws of England, as well as in the political and commercial relations of Great Britain, ought immediately to be charged with the duties of this important Consulate. The East India Company can surely find a civil servant who would be happy to accept the office of agent for the sake of the climate. Nothing would go to ruin in consequence of these changes ; for the agency of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Company, the banking business of Messrs. Briggs and Co., and supplying boats and means of transport, would form the nucleus of a very respectable establishment at Cairo. There has been great negligence in the whole sphere of our Consular establishments in the East, and it would be extremely incorrect to suppose that the Consulate at Cairo is inferior to most of our Eastern Consulates. It is the system that requires to be changed, and the root of the evil is in the Foreign Office.*

Projects for the formation of a Ship Canal and a Railway through Egypt.

Two mighty projects for improving the means of communicating with India have been of late fre-

* A return of all the Consuls-General, Consuls, Vice-Consuls, and Consular Agents in her Majesty's service, was published by order of Parliament at the end of last session. It shows the great importance of giving this numerous body a systematic form, education, and organization.

quently discussed. One is the formation of a ship canal from Suez, across the Isthmus direct to the Mediterranean at Tineh ; the other is the construction of a railway from Suez to Cairo. To carry either of these projects into execution, it would be absolutely necessary to commence by forming a canal to convey fresh water from the Nile to Suez. At present there is not a drop of potable water either at Suez or on the lines proposed for the ship canal or for the railway. Projectors may talk of digging a canal of seventy miles in length to let in the sea, or forming eighty-five miles of railway through sandy deserts without a blade of grass or a drop of fresh water, but every body who has visited Suez knows that until the ancient canal between the Nile and the Red Sea is restored, Suez can never become a commercial depôt of any use, and a ship canal to the Mediterranean, or a railway to Cairo would both, if constructed, prove nearly useless. In order to make any project of communication feasible, it is necessary that the country along the line of communication should be converted into a habitable district.

There is no doubt that the ground along the Isthmus of Suez offers very great facilities for the formation of a ship canal from Suez to Tineh. The difference of level between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean at these two places is about thirty-three feet. The length of the canal including the bed of the salt lakes would be about one hundred miles,

and the only serious difficulty would be the formation of a port at the point of communication with the Mediterranean. The enormous expense of forming this port, and the danger which vessels would encounter in making it, are objections which may perhaps, prevent this canal from being undertaken for many years. To the coasting trade of Egypt, Arabia, and Syria, it would, however, most certainly be of considerable use. To Great Britain, and even to the Mediterranean powers aspiring at a share in the Indian trade, it would be of little use. Still, it is a favourite project with the French and Austrians, as the execution of every new project gives them an additional chance of supplanting England in commercial enterprises, when all parties start at the same time in a new undertaking. The Mediterranean vessels which take in cargoes at Mocha, may certainly avail themselves of this route with advantage; and surely our Maltese and Ionian vessels, ought to be able to secure quite as large a share of this trade as the French or the Austrians. At those seasons of the year when the winds in the Red Sea admit of quick passages to the north; some saving of time would certainly be effected to all the ports between Marseilles and Bombay. But the hope entertained by Austria, France, and Italy, that this canal, if executed, would render their Indian trade totally independent of the London market, would very soon be found to be a delusion. It is needless

to repeat here, that every advantage to be expected from the construction of a ship canal between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, will be attained as effectually by the formation of the two branches of the Nile flowing to Suez and Alexandria, which will be a necessary result of Mohammed Ali's grand scheme of the *barrage*.

The project of a railway from Cairo to Suez, has met with as much favour among the English, as the ship canal among foreigners. There are certainly no great engineering difficulties in the construction of the proposed line. The length would be less than ninety miles. But a railroad for a weekly transit of passengers and goods, through a desert without a drop of water, is not likely under any circumstances to prove a profitable speculation. When a railroad exists from Bombay to Calcutta, it will be time enough to discuss the details connected with the execution of one from Cairo to Suez. If a railroad should ever be required for the communications between Europe and India, through Egypt; there can be no doubt that it must commence at Alexandria, and follow the banks of the branches of the Nile, which will connect that part with the Red Sea. But it is an idle waste of time to speculate on such a future.

The projectors both of the ship canal and of the railroad have always proceeded on the hypothesis, that they could persuade Mohammed Ali to lavish immense treasures on the execution of their plans,

without any reference to the probable returns. Under favourable circumstances, it was thought either of these undertakings would have yielded returns sufficiently large to keep up the works, if once properly finished. This might perhaps be doubtful with regard to the railroad, but with regard to the ship canal it was supposed to be more certain, as the expenses would be comparatively small.

Mohammed Ali has shown himself far wiser than these projectors. In adopting the *barrage* as the great work of his government, he will carry into execution the object of their plans, and combine the improvement of the communications between Europe and India, with the amelioration of the state of Egypt and the civilization of the East.

Mohammed Ali's system of government is adverse to the improvement of the communications with India through Egypt.

Mohammed Ali has been an able and intelligent ruler of a Turkish pashalik, but he is not a statesman, and he has a very imperfect idea of the duties of a sovereign. He is only a type of Turkish progress, and becomes great only when Egypt is compared with Greece. He is after all a foreign and Mamlook Sultan, who has laid the foundations of his domination over Egypt in his exchequer, instead of in his army. He governs his Pashalik pretty much as his predecessors did before him; but his ability has enabled him to avail himself of the

circumstances which enabled him to destroy the local independence of all subordinates, to put an end to anarchy, and constitute himself the heir of all the Georgian and Circassian Mamlooks, and the sole oppressor of the Egyptian population. The Arab empire he is supposed to be creating, is a mere Parisian delusion. He rules Egypt by a set of Mamlooks, but these Mamlooks are a set of ill-looking Turkish and Albanian revenue officers, as hostile in spirit and in act to the whole Arab race, as any of the brilliant warriors the Pasha exterminated. The Arab empire which the Parisians have supposed that Mohammed Ali had founded in the East, is nothing but a counting-house of Turkish clerks. No one knows better than the Pasha of Egypt this inherent vice in his government; but his ideas, like those of every Turk for the last century, are purely fiscal, and his conceptions of statesmanship go no further than the improvement of the share of revenue he draws from the countries he governs. His great political study is to transfer as much of the specie circulating in his dominions from the pockets of his subjects into his own treasury, as he possibly can in the shortest space of time.

The government of Mohammed Ali is, consequently, a personal and not a national affair. It reposes solely and exclusively on force, and it avails itself of science and education only as means of augmenting its power, not with the idea of regu-

lating that power by the principles of justice to the governed. Still, though it be a bad, it may yet prove a durable species of government. The duration of political bodies does not depend on their excellence. The Byzantine empire, the empire of Morocco, and the regencies of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, were all governments conducted on the worst possible principles of government, and yet they existed, or seem likely to exist, until overthrown by foreign attacks. Those who argue that the Egyptian pashalik must soon fall to decay, because its system is radically bad, show little knowledge either of history or of the state of the Egyptian population.

The administration of Egypt is characterised by a vulpine intelligence and cunning, which leads it to avoid as carefully as possible any very close contact with those European powers who can look into its social as well its political organization. Russia is too distant to be a cause of perpetual alarm. France has persuaded the Egyptian government that she occupies an isolated position in Europe, as if she were a semi-Mohammedan state, and is, consequently, the natural ally and protector of Mohammed Ali. England is, consequently, the grand object of the Pasha's fear and jealousy. Nor is his fear unfounded ; the occupation of Aden, the war in Syria, and the hostile demonstration against Alexandria, are not likely to be forgotten ; while the constant solicitation of Englishmen to be in-

oveted with a monopoly of the transit to India, said to nourish jealousy.

It need not, therefore, be a matter of wonder, that the Pasha views our communications with India through Egypt with an unfavourable eye. There can hardly be a doubt that if he dared to do it, he would close the route to-morrow, and willingly sacrifice all the pecuniary advantages that may be derived from it. Even our diplomatic gentlemen admit that he has a great aversion to facilitate our communications, and as little desire to invite any other nation to become our rivals in the transit, though this has been frequently suggested to him as a means of "humbling proud Albion." Our transit company gives him misery enough. Every increase in the number of the Indian passengers gives him a fresh alarm, and he sees danger to his government from every proposition which would make his country the high road to India. He knows that the whole Arab population of Egypt is treated by him as a conquered people, and he fears that they would eagerly solicit any strangers who might appear in sufficient numbers to relieve them from their present sufferings.

It is not, therefore, to be expected that the present Pasha of Egypt will give any assistance to the projects of forming a ship canal from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, or a railroad from Cairo to Suez. Such works may in his opinion be useful to Austria and England, but would be dangerous

to him. Even the formation of the two navigable branches of the Nile to Alexandria and Suez, will be a natural and inevitable consequence of the completion of the *barrage*, and not a part of the project, according to the Pasha's conception.

It is fortunate that the Egyptian government cannot at present venture to throw any obstacles in the way of the establishment of a weekly mail to India. But the British Government ought to lose no time in establishing a weekly post, if it study how to advance its interests in Egypt as strenuously as the Pasha watches for an opportunity to thwart them. If the day should ever come that the Pasha or his French counsellors, can venture to interrupt our communications with India either by force or fraud, we may rest assured the attempt will be made. His moderation during the Syrian war marks rather the judgment and intelligence of the man than the policy of his government. He waited his time to strike a serious blow, but the opportunity never came. The East India Company ought not to confine its preparation for future contingencies merely to presenting Mohammed Ali with a silver fountain, nor the British Government consider that it has enslaved the astute old Pasha by the present of her Majesty's portrait.

Hostility between French and English Policy in Egypt.

Ever since the celebrated rupture between France and England in 1840, which drove the troops of Mohammed Ali out of Syria, and destroyed the hopes the Parisians had indulged of ruling the destinies of the East by means of the fancied Arabic empire of the Egyptian Pasha, France has been the avowed enemy of England in the Levant. In Egypt, in Syria, in Persia, in Turkey, and in Greece, she has assailed the influence and thwarted the policy of Great Britain by every means she could venture to use short of an open declaration of war. Nor has she affected to conceal that she is steadily engaged in preparing her naval forces for a war, which she announces must occur at no very distant period. To conceal from ourselves the imminence of the danger, is to be both blind and deaf.

It is not the purpose of this work to glance at the proceedings of the French Government, either in Turkey, Syria, or Greece; but her policy in Egypt is so intimately connected with the maintenance of our communications with India, by the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, that it is necessary to offer a few remarks on the subject.

We have already remarked that France has filled the Mediterranean with her steamers, which visit every port of consequence in the Levant three

times a month. For this enterprise she receives
and she deserves the gratitude of the commercial
classes in the East. But this summer she has
alarmed the peaceable population, by keeping a
large fleet of line-of-battle ships cruising in the
Mediterranean, under the command of a prince of
the blood, a prince eager for glory, or, correctly
speaking, for hostility to England.

France already possesses in absolute sovereignty
upwards of six hundred miles of the coast of Africa,
by her conquest of Algiers. She has lately ac-
quired a considerable control over the Tunisian
fleet, by inducing the Bey to accept the services of
French officers. The naval forces of Egypt she
almost regards as her own, and she has done every-
thing in her power to discipline and improve both
the naval and military forces of Mohammed Ali.
She has aided him to construct a fleet of eleven
line-of-battle ships. She has persuaded him to
construct an arsenal and a dry dock at Alexandria,
capable of refitting a French fleet in the Levant,
after a severe naval engagement. Her engineers
are now engaged in fortifying Alexandria with the
greatest care both by sea and land, for the purpose
of rendering it a fortress which cannot be attacked
without the combined operations of a considerable
army and a large fleet.

The port of Alexandria is already fortified in
such a manner, that an attack on it would not alarm
the Pasha now as much as it did a few years ago;

when he yielded to the energy and decision of Napier, and saved us from plunging into a general war, to gratify the whims of Lord Ponsonby, without any clear idea of the national ends proposed to be attained by hostilities. History will render justice to the patriotism of Napier, who was hero enough to forego his own professional glory for the service of his country.

In order to estimate correctly the real nature of the projects of the French government in the Levant, it is necessary to keep constantly in mind the memorable words by which Monsieur Thiers revealed the precise point where the policy of France was wounded by our Syrian quixotism. In the despatch of Monsieur Thiers to Monsieur Guizot, dated the 3rd October, 1840, and communicated to the British Government on the 12th October, he writes:—"The British Cabinet proposed to wrest the *Turkish* fleet from the hands of Mohammed Ali. This France refused, fearing to excite fresh hostilities. Then began the fatal difference of opinion which has separated France from England; and which, for the interests of peace and the civilization of the world, must for ever be lamented."

These sentences reveal the truth, and afford the cool spectator a deeper insight into the thoughts of the statesmen who pretended to settle the affairs of the Levant, in 1840, than three folio volumes of parliamentary papers have the power of mystifying. The defection of the Ottoman fleet suggested to

France the possibility of carrying into immediate execution her long-cherished projects of ambition in the Levant. If she could gain a little time, she hoped to be able to officer both the Turkish and the Egyptian fleet from her own navy; and the immense force she could then display would be sufficient to contend with the naval power of Great Britain, and perhaps transfer the real suzerainty of Egypt and Syria from the Ottoman empire to the domain of Louis Philippe.

It is almost wonderful that the attempt was not made when the outcry for war was so loud; for the naval force possessed by France warranted every confidence in success. France had at the time a fleet of 17 line-of-battle ships in the Mediterranean; and eleven of these ships were cruising in the Levant. A fleet of finer ships was never assembled. The Turkish and Egyptian fleets united in the port of Alexandria amounted to 19 sail of the line, and 20 frigates. Ten thousand Greek seamen were eager to engage on board the Turkish fleet, in the expectation of being led to Constantinople to destroy the empire of the Sultan, by the French admiral.

To watch and oppose this immense force of thirty sail of the line, and as many frigates and steamers; Great Britain had only twelve sail of the line and half a dozen frigates in the Mediterranean. A momentary hope was felt by all the Christians in the Levant that France would avail herself of her position, and strike a blow for the good of others,

instead of thinking only of her own ambitious schemes. The Greeks, not only of King Otho's little nest of hornets, but also of all the islands of the Archipelago and the shores of Europe and Asia, from Thessalonica to Halicarnassus, were ready to rise. Perhaps, had France been able to surprise Malta in 1840, or been able to attack it with the same prospect of success as she might last summer, war would have been declared by her taking possession of that invaluable island. We must never forget that it was the fear of a continental combination against France that made Louis Philippe shrink from the contest, and not fear of the naval power of England. The declaration of Russia and Austria, that they were determined to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman empire, was known to mean that they would oppose the approach of French troops to the Rhine, or their entrance into Italy.

But, from that day to the present, neither the French Government nor our affectionate ally, Louis Philippe, have ever lost sight of their projects in the Levant. Mohammed Ali has been encouraged to keep up a fleet of eleven line-of-battle ships ; a fleet utterly useless to Egypt, but which entails on the finances of the country a ruinous expenditure. France keeps her Mediterranean fleet in a state of constant activity. During the past summer, Vice-Admiral the Prince de Joinville has been cruising about, with a fleet of seven sail of the line. Hearing that Malta was without a governor, and the

Mediterranean without either a line-of-battle ship or an admiral, his Royal Highness looked into the port of Malta. He saw six French steamers and three English, with a receiving ship and a brig of war, placed there to support the glory of Great Britain. The troops in garrison were insufficient to man the walls, and keep the inhabitants in order, had they been as ill-disposed towards the British authorities as the British authorities had shown themselves ill-disposed towards the inhabitants, during the carnival a few months before. Had the Prince de Joinville resolved to surprise Malta, there was really no force in the island capable of preventing him.

It is quite right that British subjects should be required not to make fools of themselves during the Catholic carnival, and the British Government would do well to enforce the observance of this rule on the future governors of Malta.

Policy of France in case of any Revolution in Egypt, or of a general War in Europe.

Let us now inquire candidly and boldly into the inevitable tendencies of the policy of France, in case any revolution, or great and sudden change, occur in the present order of things. The age of Mohammed Ali and of Louis Philippe, and the constitution of Ibrahim Pasha, render it wise to prepare for contingencies. Nor can we doubt that any circumstances which may render an European

war unavoidable, would most probably induce the French Government to assume the initiative in the Levant, where she could immediately spread hostilities far and wide, and give them a puzzling degree of complication. Our observations, however, shall be entirely confined to Egypt.

What advantage can Mohammed Ali, as sovereign of Egypt, expect to derive from the immense fleet he maintains? He cannot possibly derive any direct advantage from it. It exhausts his finances, and weakens both the offensive and defensive force of Egypt. To make it really efficient as a fleet, he would require to man it with Greeks and Sclavonians, and place it under the command of European officers. His dock-yard and his dry-dock, on which he has lavished enormous sums, are to him of comparatively little value. But to France, the fleet, the arsenal, and the dry-dock are inestimable in value; and the truth is, they were formed to give her an impregnable position in the Levant.

Had France been anxious to serve Mohammed Ali and the population of the East, and secure them against foreign invasion, whether on the part of Great Britain, Russia, or France, she would have persuaded the Pasha to establish a well organized system of steam communication, connecting all the commercial places in Africa, Egypt, Syria, and Arabia, for carrying both passengers and merchandise. This establishment would have given the government of Egypt more real influence than all

the line-of-battle ships of Mohammed Ali. It would have enabled Egypt to become really independent of any European power,—but this would have deranged the projects of France. As it is, the French Government commands all the communications in the Levant, by a well organized line of packets, forming a numerous and powerful fleet of well armed vessels. She cannot exclude other nations from visiting the ports that form her postal stations, but she takes care that her flag far exceeds that of all others united. Malta with three English, and six French steamers in the harbour, affords a good illustration of the relative capacity of the English and French naval administration, if it do not afford a perfectly correct idea of the real naval strength of the two nations. The brilliancy of Lord Ellenborough's naval arrangements in the Mediterranean, induced the Turks to conjecture that he had sent all the English ships to the East Indies, to punish the East India Company.

The results of the negligence of Great Britain, and of the ability of France, are, that France has a fleet of sixteen line-of-battle ships at Toulon, and a fleet of forty steamers in the Mediterranean. The greater part of this force, with 10,000 troops on board, may be despatched to Greece, Turkey, Syria, or Egypt, before any power is informed of their embarkation. Alexandria is already strongly fortified to receive them.

By the admirable organization of her postal

steamers, France has made her name popular throughout the Levant, and she has secured a body of contractors and sutlers in her service capable of provisioning the largest force she may be disposed to send even to the most barren corner of the Mediterranean. The lavish expenditure she engaged in for several years to secure her object, has been crowned with complete success, and the utility of the object she had immediately in view, has rendered the French name deservedly popular in Italy, Malta, Greece, Turkey, Syria, and Egypt, and given her government a degree of moral influence far exceeding their calculations. To this moral influence on the inhabitants, she is principally indebted for her victory over British policy in Greece and Egypt. English men-of-war and steamers are rarely seen for any useful purpose in the Levant, and our Ambassadors, Ministers, and Consuls, are so evidently dependent on France for their despatches, and for the means of cavilling at French policy, that the natives not unreasonably conclude, either that the purse of England is exhausted, or that the rapidly increasing naval power of France, intimidates the British Government from venturing on any rivalry with so powerful an enemy. The effect is indubitable; the moral influence of England on the minds of the inhabitants of the shores of the Levant is on the decline.

But there can be no doubt that the great object of France in the organization of her fleet of man-

of-war steamers, to keep up the communications of Great Britain with the Levant, and with Alexandria, was to increase the naval power of France to such a degree, as to enable her to throw an immense military force on any desired point before any other power could attempt to interrupt her projects.

To illustrate as strongly as possible what are the projects of France in Egypt, let us consider what she possesses the power of effecting. It is not intended to assert that the French Cabinet at this moment contemplates the execution of the plan we shall here discuss; but it is evident that some project not very dissimilar is constantly passing through the minds of the members of the French Cabinet, and it is equally certain that Great Britain has not the means of offering the smallest resistance to the execution of these projects. This hypothetical case will consequently be much nearer the truth than many persons in England at the first glance may be inclined to believe.

Let the death of the sovereign of Egypt happen while the court is at Cairo, and suppose the smallest disturbance to occur among the troops, whose pay is generally eighteen months in arrear; or amongst the men of the law or clergy, ever hostile to the introduction of European civilization and Christian principles of taxation; a claimant would immediately present himself to dispute the succession to the sovereignty. The European consuls would meet

together, and strive to meddle. A disposition to meddle, whether right or wrong, is inherent in their semi-diplomatic nature, and they cannot help it, however absurd the figure it may induce them to make. They meddled when Mohammed Ali, in 1845, pretended that he was going to resign the sovereignty of Egypt, and to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. Yet the absurd exhibition they made on that memorable occasion will not teach them prudence. Experience teaches fools, according to the proverb. We may logically infer, that very few diplomatists are ever fools ; for they are a race on which all the lessons of experience, as well as the rules of consistency, are completely thrown away.

Any agent of a French consul, prepared for the contingency, could easily get up a timely rebellion, warranted to last six weeks. The danger of a civil war would alarm the European merchants and Indian travellers in Egypt, to whom anarchy would be a direct loss of time and money. In such circumstances, it would not require any wonderful tact on the part of the French consul, to induce his colleagues to draw up a joint representation to their courts, calling on them to take measures with the greatest promptitude to save the Europeans in Egypt from plunder, the country from civil war and anarchy, and the route to India from interruption. If the French consul at the time be a man of energy, he will immediately despatch a steamer to Toulon to demand an army of 10,000 men, and the French

Cabinet will send it. He will trust to the fears of our merchants, and the alarm of the East India Company at a total interruption of their communications, for the means of negotiation. To prepare for the arrival of 10,000 French troops in the impregnable fortress of Alexandria, he will probably induce our mercantile agent of the East India Company at Cairo to ask for a hundred men from Aden, to secure the Transit Hotel and the arid shore of Suez.

This contingency will not find the French Government, or the numerous partisans of France in Egypt, by any means unprepared. An embargo of ten days will furnish the Government with twenty steamers, ready to sail ; and eight line-of-battle ships have, for the last eighteen months, been constantly in a state of readiness to embark troops at the shortest notice. These ships would be able to convey 5000 men to Alexandria, before a single European power was aware of the intentions of the French Cabinet ; and, by the time the other European powers had made any representations on the subject to the French Government, this first division of the army might be followed by a second division of equal strength. When the moment presents itself, France is not likely to display less energy and decision in supporting her Egyptian ally, than Mr: Canning did in supporting our interests in Portugal. It is very easy to give the European powers assurances that nothing but the interests of commerce

and humanity induced the French Government to undertake the expedition, and that the French troops shall be withdrawn the moment their presence ceases to be necessary for the preservation of order. Greece and Ancona will be cited as proofs of the good faith of France, and if Algiers be remembered at all, some of the European powers will be happy to see France in possession of Egypt merely to humble the pride of England. The immediate effect of the change will be, to remove protocolizing from London to Paris, and break Lord Palmerston's heart.

In the mean time, an army of ten thousand French troops, with an equal number of Arabs, and 5000 French seamen getting the Egyptian fleet ready for sea, would soon put France in possession of a force amply sufficient to secure her from any attack for many months, and afford her time to prepare a force capable of meeting any force Great Britain could send against her. By availing herself of all the resources of Egypt, she may in a few months add a well-organized force of infantry, cavalry, and artillery to her own troops, and take the field with an admirable army of 50,000 men, perfect in all its details. By collecting sailors in the Archipelago, she may easily man all the naval forces of Egypt, and collect a fleet of 26 line-of-battle ships and a host of frigates and steamers in the Levant. It is needless to say that the news of any such event would spread the flame of rebellion through all Syria, and that before a week elapsed, Greece

would be involved in hostilities with Turkey ; and the Greeks would be in open rebellion in every province of the Ottoman empire. In a month a Russian army would probably be in Constantinople, and an Austrian in Athens. Our own communications with India, whether through Egypt or by the Euphrates, would be at the mercy of France. It is needless to attempt to add any colouring to a picture so true to nature as the one we have drawn, or to indulge in any idle excursions into the regions of vain conjecture. Common sense presents a future prospect which is sufficiently alarming.

State of Preparation of Great Britain for the Preservation of her own Possessions, and for Maintaining Peace in the Mediterranean.

The force Great Britain possessed in the Mediterranean, during the last year, was utterly inadequate even to defend our possessions against a sudden attack of any of the secondary naval powers. For some months there was not an English line-of-battle ship within the Straits of Gibraltar. While the Prince de Joinville was cruising about with a fleet manned by 6000 Frenchmen, our whole naval, military, militia, and police forces at Malta did not exceed 3000 men ; and at Corfu our garrison was even smaller than at Malta, while the inhabitants are notoriously ill-disposed to our domination. Our whole naval force in the Mediterranean was hardly a match for the French post-office steamers ; and

the commodore of the French packets often commanded a larger force in the harbour of Malta than the British port-admiral.

Malta is the basis of the British power in the Mediterranean : its possession does more to secure peace in the Levant than a naval force of twenty line-of-battle ships. Yet Malta was left during the summer of 1846 with a garrison so weak as not to be able to occupy the extensive works with a competent number of guards and sentinels. We gave all Europe a proof, either of our incompetency to furnish the means of defending this valuable possession of the British crown, or of our indifference to the danger of losing it.

While our permanent force at Malta is thus utterly inadequate for defending the fortress, we leave this island, which ought to be the centre of our power, without a direct line of communication with our other Mediterranean possessions. Gibraltar, Malta, Corfu, Paxos, Santa Maura, Cefalonia, Zante, and Cerigo, are not united together by a regular packet service, as France has connected her possessions on the coast of Africa and Austria, her islands and cities on the Dalmatian coast. Gibraltar and Corfu might belong to different European powers, for any advantage resulting from a common connection conferred on them by the British Government.

If our present negligence continue until Moham-

med Ali has completed the *barrage* of the Nile, France may find herself enabled to commence hostilities with Great Britain, by blockading Malta, seizing Alexandria, passing a fleet of steamers into the Red Sea, and assailing our commerce in the Indian ocean.

A very little reflection ought to teach the most peaceably disposed Englishman, that the position of our country excites violent feelings of jealousy abroad, and that we must always be prepared for the most vigorous measures of defence, though we resolve in future to lay aside the character of aggressors. The eyes of every government and people in Europe are constantly directed to the state of our possessions in the Mediterranean. Gibraltar, they say, ought to belong to Spain, and the Ionian Islands either to the Greeks or to king Otho. Malta we ought not to be allowed to keep, because we deny the inhabitants the privileges of British subjects, and the advantages of the British constitution. Indeed, if it be really intended that Gibraltar and Malta are to form permanent portions of the British empire, they ought to possess the right of sending representatives to the British Parliament.

The first sign of the decay of nations is visible in their trusting to past glory as a means of defence. Now when Malta, the centre of our power in the Mediterranean, is left with a garrison of two thousand men, and a fleet inferior to that of the king of

Sardinia ; when no steam communication, available for passengers and commercial purposes exists to unite our possessions in one body, can we wonder that foreigners are beginning to imagine that the resources of Great Britain are exhausted, or her councils palsied by imbecility ?

All Europe asks, What is to hinder France from seizing Malta, if her ambition be really as great as the English are in the habit of asserting ? She might commence hostilities by a *coup-de-main*, which would almost repay her for the treachery. She might herself give us the first intimation that she was in possession of Malta, and add the strongest assurances that she had taken possession of the island at the request of the inhabitants, who had resolved to celebrate the ensuing carnival according to their ancient usages. Nothing invites attack so much as gross negligence and imprudence. England, without a naval force in the Mediterranean, with a few half-garrisoned fortresses, and half a dozen rotten post-office packets, presents a sad contrast to the power and activity of France, and the enterprise and intelligence of Austria.

Our only ally in the Levant, Turkey, is weak and useless. Syria threatens to be soon a source of annoyance, both to the Sultan and Lord Palmerston. Egypt is hostile in feeling ; Greece is hostile not only in feeling and policy, but, as far as she can venture, in act. All Europe envies our

Indian empire ; yet we not only neglect to improve our own communications with that valuable empire, but we even leave our line of communication exposed to constant interruption. We act as if we expected the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Company to carry on any war that may occur to interrupt the communications entrusted to their charge.

Measures demanded by the Political and Commercial Interests of Great Britain.

We have announced with sufficient clearness the general measures which the interests of Great Britain imperiously reclaim. It is not our intention to enter into any very minute detail concerning these measures. It is necessary to point out errors, and to discuss questions of policy ; but the details of the executive measures necessary for repairing past errors must be entrusted to men in office, by whom alone they can be perfectly understood. Though officials are little inclined to give themselves any additional trouble, when not engaged in the gratification of a personal whim, they are generally better acquainted with how business ought to be transacted, and with the means of transacting it both expeditiously and efficiently, than the critics who detect their errors, or the public, who finds it necessary to rouse them from their lethargy, or compel them to abandon their crotchets. This must be our apology

for some little vagueness in the subsequent observations.

The state of defence in which we keep Malta, and the strength of our naval force in the Mediterranean, will always exert great influence on the foreign relations of Egypt, and on our communications with India through that country. Malta ought, consequently, never to be without a garrison of at least 3000 British troops of the line, and the total force of effective men in the island ought never to be less than 5000. Our fleet in the Mediterranean ought to consist of two line-of-battle ships, and as many large frigates, besides the steamers, small frigates, and sloops at present on the station. A regular service of British Colonial steamers, to visit Gibraltar, Malta, and the Ionian Islands twice a month, ought to be established without loss of time. To render these steamers really useful to our Mediterranean possessions, they must not only be arranged to carry passengers at the rates, and according to the various classes, of the French packets; but they must also be compelled to carry goods at reasonable freights. A government which, in our day, neglects to provide for the commercial communications of the people it taxes, fails to do its duty. When the people govern and tax themselves, it may be a different matter.

With the example of France and Austria before us, we must either make great improvements in our

steam communications in the Mediterranean, or we shall become contemptible both in the opinion of our subjects and our allies. If we add the gift of a free press, and the boon of the establishment of a well organized Greek university at Corfu, we may even hope to regain some portion of the influence we once possessed with the Christian inhabitants of the Levant. To possess any real political influence in the East, we must have the moral power of assuming the arbitration between France and Russia; and, to do this, it will not suffice to play second fiddle to the Sultan, in order to give a galvanic motion to the Mohammedan population.

But to direct our attention more particularly to our communications with India. It certainly reflects some disgrace on our ministers that while France has three packets every month to Alexandria from Marseilles, Great Britain has only two from Southampton and Malta. Our direct communications between England and Alexandria (which is our half-way house to India) are not more frequent than those between Austria and Alexandria. The inference seems to be, that in the opinion of our aristocratic ministers, the communications of Great Britain with India are of the same importance as the trade between Trieste and Alexandria is in the eyes of the popular government of Austria. The bulk of the mails, and the number of the passengers, have, for some time past, required a weekly communication

with India ; but the interests of the Egyptian Transit Company, the British Consulate, and the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Company have proved too strong against those of the public and our Indian Empire. The transport of passengers in the steamers on the Red Sea, requires to be regulated by Act of Parliament just as much as that of emigrants in the passage-ships to Canada. This improvement would also have a good effect, politically, by doubling the number of British steamers both in the Levant and the Red Sea.

It is also absolutely necessary to regulate our communications with India through Egypt, by a treaty with the Pasha and the Porte. Limits ought to be put to the monopoly of any transit company, whether that company be in the hands of Mohammed Ali, the Anglo-Egyptians, the other foreigners in Egypt, the renegades, or the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Company. The passage through Egypt ought to be thrown open by treaty, and guaranteed equally to all European nations, and the transit to all properly organised companies.

Arrangements might, at the same time, be entered into with the Pasha for deepening the canal of Alexandria, so as to render it navigable for passage-boats during the whole year, and for conveying fresh-water to Suez, by the Wadi Tomlat and the salt lakes, without waiting for the completion of the barrage. Neither of these operations would be

attended with any great difficulty, nor cause any excessive expense, while to secure their being executed in a proper manner and kept in a due state of repair, Great Britain and the other powers making use of them should engage to pay a fixed sum annually to the Pasha in lieu of all taxes and tolls. It would be absolutely necessary for the British Government to make this payment directly to the Pasha, as it must be admitted that if Mohammed Ali, or the Egyptian administration, were to be allowed to establish tolls, commerce would soon be ruined, and the works would never be kept in proper order.

Any jealousy the Pasha now entertains against England would be considerably abated, if he saw the British Government adopt measures which would insure the participation of the other European powers in the rights and privileges of transit through Egypt. He would then feel that he had obtained an additional guarantee against the ambitious projects both of England and France. And it is surely our duty, while we are seeking the means of preventing France from suddenly taking possession of Alexandria, to consent to the adoption of measures which may guard against our as suddenly occupying Suez.

The sovereign of Egypt can never find a better guarantee for the neutrality of his dominions, than the existence of a great highway between Southern Europe and India, running from Alexandria to Suez.

Let Mohammed Ali make the passage as free as nature has made that round the Cape of Good Hope, and he may rest assured, that no one European power will venture to attempt suddenly rendering itself master of such a line of communication.

On the other hand, if the present ruler of Egypt persists in a system of monopoly, intrigue, and exclusion, his conduct is likely to aid, at last, in bringing about a hostile collision between Great Britain and France; and in that collision,—whatever else may happen,—the dynasty of Mohammed Ali will certainly perish, and the independence of Egypt will most probably be destroyed.

24 JOURNAL

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